

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the above-identified Office Action. The above listing of the claims supersedes any previous listing. Favorable reexamination and reconsideration is respectfully requested in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the subject matter claimed over that which is disclosed in the cited art. Support for this claiming is found at least in the paragraph beginning page 27, line 1 and the paragraphs at page 3, line 3, and page 22, line 5.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102

The rejection of claims under 35 USC § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nolte et al. is respectfully traversed. In this response, the claims have been amended in a manner which clarifies the claimed subject matter over that which is disclosed in Nolte et al. A review of the Nolte et al. reference reveals that the claimed subject matter (as currently claimed) differs in at least that :

- 1) the game is played among a plurality of players;
- 2) a progress of the game comprises a normal mode and a special mode;
- 3) the player operates in the order of the players; and
- 4) the dummy interval imitates the special interval.

Nolte et al. discloses a video game slot machine program. Inasmuch as a slot machine is used by a single player and there is no disclosure of a plurality of players interacting on the same "machine", virtual as it may be, it is submitted that the claims as they stand before the PTO are free of anticipation for least these reasons. Attention is called to column 18 and Fig. 8B, wherein a play process and flowchart of the game is disclosed. Further, attention should be had to column 20 and Fig. 12 which disclose a procedure for providing a plurality of terminals with the slot game via the internet. However, as noted above, the game is played individually and there is not disclosure or suggestion of interaction between a plurality of players on

line or otherwise.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103

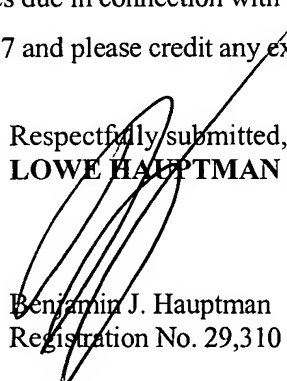
The rejection of claim 6 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nolte et al. in view of Okuda is respectfully traversed. While Okuda may disclose a mah-jong game this disclosure does not cure the deficiency that the primary reference to Nolte et al. fails to address the requirement that a plurality of players play the game in order. The rejection therefore fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for at least this reason.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that the claims as they have been amended are allowable over the art which has been applied in this Office Action. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application is courteously solicited.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 07-1337 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,  
**LOWE HAUPTMAN & BERNER, LLP**

  
Benjamin J. Hauptman  
Registration No. 29,310

Customer Number: 22429  
1700 Diagonal Road, Suite 300  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
(703) 684-1111  
(703) 518-5499 Facsimile  
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